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The primary divisions of the Ophidia (or Serpentes as they should be called) adopted, are nine families, which have very different values. These can be associated in superfamilies of approximately equal value, but this Dr. Boulenger has not done, but has contented himself with giving an analytical table (pp. 1-2), where some of the characters of these superfamilies are pointed out, in the dichotomous order, which does not express relative value. Many groups usually regarded as families are not recognized, as for instance the Najidæ and Dipsadidæ, which are included in the Colubridæ. In a phylogenetic table the interesting suggestion is made that the Solenoglyphous snakes are derived from the Opisthoglyphous, and not from the Proteroglyphous.

In seeking for generic characters the dentition has been closely examined. The value of dental characters has been thoroughly tested, and the result is valuable to the student, although we do not always agree with the use made of the information in the Catalogue. The author does not adopt the characters used by Duméril and Bibron in many instances, for good reasons, but he introduces others of his own which are no better, as the numbers and in some cases the relative lengths of the teeth. In practice it is often impossible to determine whether teeth are of equal length or a little longer at one or the other end of the jaw; nor is the number of the teeth in the jaws precisely definitive of anything but species, as can be readily seen from the results recorded in the present work. The division or union of the anal plate and urosteges, is generally rejected as a character, although its value is testified to by the uniform use made of it by ophiologists. In fact the generic definitions are based on no uniform principle, and the author seems to have been possessed at times with the idea that it were an especial merit to differ as much as possible from his predecessors.

One result of the study of this work will be to prove to ophiologists that it is desirable to become acquainted with new characters of definitive value before we can have the true system of the snakes. An important addition to our knowledge in this direction, i. e. of the characters of the hemipenis and of the lungs, came too late to be incorporated in the present work.—E. D. COPE.

Nuttall's Handbook of Birds.¹—A new edition, with important additions, and a series of more than one hundred colored illustrations.

¹ *A Popular Handbook of the Ornithology of Eastern North America.*—By Thomas Nuttall. Revised and annotated by Montague Chamberlain. Vol. I, *Land Birds*. Vol. II *Game and Water Birds*. Second edition, with corrections and additions. Illustrated with one hundred and seventy-two figures, two colored

This favorite work, easily understood, handy, and popular, including all of Nuttall's delightful descriptions of bird-life, which was some time since fully annotated by Montague Chamberlain, who added the birds not known in Nuttall's time, will be found more useful and valuable than ever before, Mr. Chamberlain having again gone over the work with the greatest care, bringing the information down to date.

Colored representations of the birds being desirable for amateurs and students, a series of twenty plates, containing one hundred and ten figures of birds, has been added to the present edition. The drawings have been mostly copied from those of Wilson, and may be relied on for accuracy, although in some instances the tints do not come up to the brilliancy of Nature. We recommend the book as the one for the family, where the strictly scientific side of ornithology is not the chief desideratum. We mean by this that the work is not devoted to the anatomy and physiology of birds, but is one by which the species may be identified, and where descriptions of their habits and geographical range may be found; all set forth in admirable style.

Education of the Central Nervous System.²—This book is an endeavor to apply the most recent results of psychology and brain physiology to the theory of education. The author quotes from Donaldson and other well-known writers on the topography of the brain and localization of functions. In view of the close connection between cerebral development and mental capacity, he advocates an education which shall develop all parts of the brain to the greatest possible extent. He recommends especially that children be trained to distinguish every shade of sensation-difference, and to recall in vivid images the objects of every kind which they have experienced; if such training be begun early in life, the brain cells are better developed, and in after life our mental images are more numerous and more definite.

Unfortunately the book is limited almost exclusively to a discussion of sensation and memory, leaving out of account entirely the higher rational processes. It becomes an appeal for an education which is fundamentally æsthetic and literary, as distinguished from scientific. Book-learning for children is decried, and teachers are urged to take their pupils out into the woods and fields, and have them learn from frontispieces, and twenty colored plates, containing one hundred and ten figures of the most important land and water birds. 2 vols. Crown 8vo. Cloth, extra, gilt top, \$7.50 *net.*; half crushed Levant morrocco, extra, gilt top, \$13.50 *net.*—LITTLE, BROWN & CO., Publishers, 254 Washington Street, Boston.

²The Education of the Central Nervous System, by R. P. Halleck. New York, The Macmillan Co., 66 Fifth Ave. 1896. Pp. xii, 258; price \$1.